

# The Two Mrs. Vanderbilts and the Lusitania - The Two Mrs. Astors and the Titanic - A STRANGE PARALLEL



Baby Alfred Vanderbilt Whose Hopes of Social Leadership Were Wrecked With the Lusitania.

**How Two Ocean Tragedies Gave Back  
in Each Case to the First Wives  
All They Had Lost  
by Divorce---**

**and Took  
Away from the Second All They  
Had Hoped to Gain by Marriage**

PERHAPS the most extraordinary parallel that has ever occurred in the social history of New York is found in the deaths of Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt and Colonel John Jacob Astor.

Each man belonged to a small group of the world's richest men. Each perished in a surprising, shocking and colossal ocean tragedy. Each left a divorced wife with an only son. Each left a recently wedded widow who had secured her position as head of a great multi-millionaire's household after some rather surprising social adventures.

And here comes the most surprising parallel of all. In each case the divorced wife, who had been thrown into more or less obscurity by the divorce, regained her original position through the tragic death of her former husband and became once more practically the head of one of the world's colossal fortunes.

There are evidently some striking moral lessons to be drawn from these events, which it would not be polite to define too closely.

The divorced wife who gains so much by Alfred Vanderbilt's death is known as Mrs. French-Vanderbilt. She was formerly Miss Elsie French, a member of a family long socially prominent in New York and Newport. The widow who passes into obscurity is Mrs. Margaret Emerson Vanderbilt, daughter of Captain Isaac Emerson, of Baltimore, and for a time the wife of Dr. Smith Hollins McKim.

The divorced wife who became a great social figure by Colonel John Jacob Astor's death is Mrs. John Astor, formerly Ava Willing, of Philadelphia, and celebrated on two continents as a queenly representative of American beauty. The widow who by the same tragedy passes into relative obscurity is Mrs. Madeleine Force Astor, a very handsome young woman, who before her marriage to the late millionaire was not a prominent social figure in New York. Young Mrs. Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt had been planning an extensive social campaign in London and New York, when a German submarine sank the Lusitania on May 7, plunged her into mourning and ended all her plans and hopes. Young Mrs. Madeleine Force Astor similarly was thinking, three years ago, how, after a brief period of travel and rest, she would embark on a great campaign for the conquest of New York society with her husband's millions. But an iceberg, not less ruthless than the German submarine, came in the night and sank the mighty Titanic on April 14, 1912, during her maiden voyage, drowned Colonel Astor and with it his wife's hopes.

By her former husband's death, Mrs. French-Vanderbilt was restored to the full enjoyment of the highest position she could have had while married to him. As a divorced wife she was under no obligation to waste time in mourning and to remain in social retirement during that period. She becomes the dominant personage in the house of Vanderbilt of the younger generation.

In the same way Mrs. Ava Willing Astor was made by death once more the dominant figure in the Astor family. Her son, William Vincent Astor, was left fully nine-tenths of the Astor fortune, with the family country seat. His mother, to whom he was devoted, became his principal guide and mentor. It was even remarked by an acute social observer that death gave Mrs. Astor back her own son, for before the tragedy he had been compelled to spend a great deal of his time with his father.

When Alfred Vanderbilt's will was made known, New York society was surprised to find to what extent his son by his first wife had been made the head of the family. Indeed the details are not yet fully known to the public. He acted just as John Jacob Astor did when he left the bulk of his property to his son, by his neglected first wife, in spite of the romance that filled the few months of his life before his death.

Alfred Vanderbilt had known and loved his little son, William H. Vanderbilt, who was a boy of twelve at the time of his estrangement from his first wife. Doubtless the imperative promptings of his conscience and fatherly love told him that he had not a right to discriminate against his own son because he had quarrelled with one woman or fallen in love with another.

Therefore he left to his oldest son the family homestead, Oakland Farm, near

Newport, and every heirloom and token that denoted headship of the family. This place was particularly dear to the first Mrs. Vanderbilt, because it was there that she had passed her honeymoon, when expectations of happiness were unclouded. It was there that he had his finest horses, that he accumulated his most valuable personal belongings and that he made his real home.

His second wife was equally attached to Oakland Farm, for she had planned to make it the principal scene of her social triumphs. After her husband's will was read she paid a sad farewell visit to the beautiful place. She said goodbye to the old employes, looked over the gardens and stables and packed up all her belongings. Mrs. French-Vanderbilt, who has been living at Harbour View, Newport, is ready to move into Oakland Farm with her son.

How much importance Alfred Vanderbilt attached to Oakland Farm is partly shown by the wording of his will, in which he says:

"I hereby give to the executors of this, my will, as trustees of the trusts and of each of the trusts created by this, my will, full power and authority, in their discretion, to sell at public auction or private sale, at such times or places, in such manner, and upon such terms and conditions as they shall deem expedient, or to lease or to rent or to otherwise dispose of, in such manner, for such periods and upon such terms as they shall deem expedient, any and all my real estate, wheresoever the same may be situated, excepting only my said real estate known as Oakland Farm, as well as any and all personal property, constituting a part of any such trust, and to execute and deliver any and all deeds, leases or other instruments necessary or proper for the accomplishment of such purposes."

Alfred Vanderbilt left to his oldest son the coach Venture, which first made the reputation of its owner as the leading amateur coachman of the world. The testator also left to this son the family portraits and the busts of his father, Cornelius Vanderbilt, bequeathed to him by his father's will, and finally the cherished gold medal voted by Congress to the little fellow's great-grandfather, Commodore Vanderbilt, at the close of the Civil War. This medal is regarded as a great honor in the Vanderbilt family. Alfred Vanderbilt further desired that in the event of his oldest son's death without sons, the medal should go to the testator's oldest brother, Cornelius Vanderbilt, who was partly disinherited for marrying Miss Grace Wilson against his father's wishes.

The provisions of the will on these points say:

"I give and bequeath to my son, William H. Vanderbilt, my coach known as the Venture."

"I give and bequeath to my son, William H. Vanderbilt, the portraits and busts bequeathed to me by the first article of the will of my father, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and the gold medal voted by the Congress of the United States to my great-grandfather, Cornelius Vanderbilt, at the close of the war of the rebellion, in 1865, and which medal was bequeathed to me by the sixteenth article of the will of my father. If my said son shall not survive me, then I give and bequeath said portraits and said bust and said gold medal to my brother, Cornelius Vanderbilt."

With all these heirlooms and tokens of distinction as head of the family, Alfred Vanderbilt left a proportionate share of his estate to his oldest son. For instance, he stipulated that his trustees should set aside ample funds for the upkeep of Oakland Farm and other property left to the oldest son.

A trust fund of \$5,000,000 established by Alfred Vanderbilt's father for his benefit was left entirely to the oldest son. Alfred had already settled \$16,000,000 on his first wife on their divorce, and this, of course, will go to her son.

It is significant that Alfred Vanderbilt's place in the Adirondacks, Sagamore Lodge, was bequeathed to his widow, Mrs. Margaret Emerson Vanderbilt. It was this place to which the deceased sportsman used to retire for relaxation when his relations with his first wife were becoming strained. It had no pleasant associations for her and would have been an unwelcome gift, even if it had been left to her son.

In leaving Oakland Farm to his oldest son, Alfred Vanderbilt followed the example of Colonel John Jacob Astor, who bequeathed



PHOTO BY ALMAN & CO. N.Y.

**The First Mrs. Alfred Vanderbilt, Who Like the First Mrs. Astor, Regains by Death Practically All She Lost by Divorce.**

the old Astor family place, at Rhinebeck-on-the-Hudson, and the secondary country seat, Beechwood, at Newport, to his son by his first wife. To his young widow Colonel Astor left for life his town house in New York, but she has been complaining with some show of reason that the fortune he left was hardly adequate for

**Mrs. Margaret Emerson Vanderbilt, the Second Wife of Alfred Vanderbilt Who Passes by the Lusitania's Sinking Into the Same Social Obscurity That the Sinking of the Titanic Brought to the Second Mrs. John Jacob Astor.**

the maintenance of this place and her son, Alfred Vanderbilt left no New York house, but it is generally understood in society that his father's great town house, at Fifth avenue and Fifty-seventh to Fifty-eighth streets, and Beaulieu, the Newport villa, will eventually pass to his oldest son, William H. Vanderbilt.

The second Mrs. Alfred Vanderbilt is left in a position with regard to European society curiously similar to that of the second Mrs. John Jacob Astor. The first Mrs. Vanderbilt has a sister married to General Lord Chylesmore in England, and consequently her own position in English society is of the best. Alfred Vanderbilt's recent associations in England had been largely with sporting characters, and his widow can expect no warm reception from high society.

Similarly Mrs. Madeleine Force Astor must find herself embarrassed in England, for her predecessor had already entrenched herself very securely there.

One of the oddities of the situation is that each millionaire gave his own Christian name to a son by his second wife, while he gave a family name and the bulk of the property to a son by the first wife.

## Some Easy Ways for You to Break Up a Cold

MANY physicians are convinced that the proper treatment of a cold depends in some degree upon the way the person has taken the cold. We must go back to the beginning and begin where the cold began.

For instance, if one catches cold by getting the feet cold, say by going out with thin shoes, and getting wet and chilled, it is not the cold, but the long chilling that does the harm. The best measure is to take a hot foot bath. The cold got in through the feet, so it should be driven out through the feet.

If one gets cold by exposing the back of the neck to a draft, resulting in a lame neck, soreness, cold and stiffness in the neck, then hot applications should be made to the back of the neck.

If the cold is the result of general exposure and a lowering of the general bodily tempera-

ture, then a general hot bath is good, and that really is about the best thing for any person who is taking or has taken cold.

When the cold first shows itself, take a hot bath, but not in the morning. Take the hot bath at night. Drink a couple of glasses of hot water, get into the hot bath and stay there about half an hour.

Have the bath hot enough to set up perspiration. It may be as hot as one likes in the beginning, but when perspiration begins, lower the temperature to about one hundred degrees, and keep it there for about half an hour more. Then lower it to about ninety-five degrees and stay in the bath another hour. One may safely remain in the bath two hours if suffering with a really bad cold.

Drink some more water at the close of the bath and go to bed. It is well to drink just as much water as one can.

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Little John Jacob Astor, Whom the Titanic's Sinking Forced Into the Same Relatively Insignificant Position as That in Which the Lusitania's Loss Placed Baby Alfred Vanderbilt.

(And Below)  
William H. Vanderbilt, Who Occupies Exactly the Same Place in the Vanderbilt Case as Vincent Astor Does in the Astor Case.

